

Understanding the Occupational Stress of Interscholastic Athletic Directors

by Lawrence W. Judge and Ira L. Judge

Given the stressful nature of today's work place and understanding that stress in excess can have harmful health consequences, it is important to be able to identify sources of stress in order to form the proper coping mechanisms. The purpose of the study was to describe perceived administrative stress and its relationship to demographics among Interscholastic athletic directors. A total of 288 valid questionnaires consisting of demographic questions and utilizing a modified version of the Administrative Stress Index (ASI) were returned from high school athletic directors in the state. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations) were performed for all dependent variables (four dimensions of administrative stress) and independent factors (related factors). The calculations of the 95th confidence intervals revealed that each dimension of administrative stress were progressively less on a continuum from task-based stress to conflict mediating stress to boundary spanning stress to role-based stress. This study found no significance for the relationships between stress and age, the number of years served as Athletic Director, the number of hours per day assigned to Athletic Director duties, and the size of the school by student population.

Key words: athletics, education, leadership, management

Introduction

Stress management is an important topic for sport organizations given the increasing management pressures stemming from economics, external media, parental pressures, and athletic scrutiny by many constituent groups. Whereas stressful environments promote turnover, burnout, ineffectiveness and health issues, proper management of stress at work equates to quality of living and productivity (Burton et al., 2006). One position in particular that is subjected to high stress levels is that of the interscholastic athletic director. Not only are athletic directors susceptible to high stress, Railey & Tschauner (1993) stated that managers are more prone to stress than other workers due to the problem-solving nature of their occupations. The daily challenges or stressors in the work place can sometimes be motivating and at other times overwhelming.

Stress, if managed properly, can be harnessed to accomplish difficult tasks in the work place. A challenge or what is sometimes referred to as eustress, often energizes us psychologically and physically, and it motivates us to learn new skills and master our jobs. When a challenge is met, we feel relaxed and satisfied. Thus, challenge is an important ingredient for healthy and productive work (Selye, 1974). Distress, on the other hand, is the harmful

element of stress that can cause damage to our physical and emotional being (Selye, 1974). Cannon (1932) coined the term "fight or flight," when referring to the arousal condition of the body in the face of danger. The body prepares itself quickly, efficiently and comprehensively for physical battle or flight. Selye (1956) observed that physical changes which take place in the body during strong emotional arousal are the same, regardless of the type of emotion experienced. The proper management of stress in the workplace equates to a positive quality of living and productivity, not to detrimental health consequences (Burton et al., 2006; Pelletier, 1984). Understanding the particular stressors of a career is important to stress management; identifying specific possible stressors is the first step to coping appropriately.

Traditionally, the job of athletic director was viewed as a non-threatening reward offered to a coach at the conclusion of a career. As the basic mission of the secondary public school expanded over the past decades, so did the responsibilities of the Athletic director. School corporations typically hire individuals, for the position of athletic director, who are already trained in producing results, experienced in program management, who have administration skills that are specific to budgets, personnel, event planning, fund raising and marketing (Davis, 2002). The athletic director holds a vital position in the scope of the total school program. Messina (1981) suggested that the title "athletic director" should be replaced by the term "athletic administrator", since he/she is an educational administrator responsible for the conduct of the athletic program. The trend today is to have the athletic director as part of the school's administration. The responsibilities of the position have grown so large that a full time administrator is needed to administer the athletic program. Blumette (1992) in a study of interscholastic athletic directors in the State of Indiana found that seventy-six percent of the athletic directors in the state are considered a part of

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the school administration team.

Not only is the athletic director an administrator, but at times, must operate as a business person (Davis, 2002). Fuoss & Troppman (1977) found that athletic administration has evolved into a highly sophisticated big business. The administrator must possess skills and knowledge most often associated with business administration as well. Athletic budgets, in secondary schools, deal with large sums of money and receipts/expenditures that must be accounted for. To the athletic director, this means performing increasing managerial functions such as planning, budgeting, organizing, staging, coordinating, reporting, innovating, and representing.

The amount of time that an athletic director is allotted to perform his/her duties varies widely. Some large school systems view the position of athletic director as a full-time position, while in other school systems, the athletic director receives one hour of released time each day to perform his/her duties (Blumette, 1992). The amount of support (such as secretaries or assistants) to assist the athletic director also varies from school system to school system (Blumette, 1992). The lack of support and time to do the job can make the interscholastic athletic director's job stressful. Blumette (1992), in a survey of two-hundred and twenty randomly selected athletic directors, found that twenty-six percent of the interscholastic athletic directors in the state of Indiana are working full-time. The remaining seventy-four percent part-time Athletic Directors work additionally as teachers, coaches or assistant principals. Blumette also reported that only thirty-nine percent of the interscholastic athletic directors in the state of Indiana have full-time secretaries. Not only are athletic directors susceptible to high stress, Railey and Tschauner (1993) stated that managers are more prone to stress than other workers due to the problem-solving nature of their occupations, whether in schools, fitness centers, or sports programs. They concluded, managers are constantly faced with decisions which cause stress.

Understanding the specific occupational stressors of an interscholastic athletic director involves attending to the findings of studies investigating colleagues in closely-related careers. An especially insightful area of research involves music education (Hancock, 2002; Stern & Cox, 1993). Music teachers face performance pressures, time demands, and competitive stressors much like Athletic Directors. The conclusion for the music teachers was burnout, a negative emotional state affecting work productivity (Stern & Cox, 1993). There has also been extensive research interest in teacher burnout (Pines, 2002). Teachers who experience burnout are likely to neglect class preparation, while demonstrating intransigence and apathy toward their students. Teacher expectations of students are minimal; they present a low tolerance for frustration in the classroom, and feel emotionally and physically exhausted (Farber & Miller, 1981; Maslach, 1976). Occupational stress should not be equated with burnout. Researchers from connected disciplines, such as coaching and education, have addressed, defined, and dissected, the concept of burnout since Freudenberger's seminal study in 1974 (Maslach et al., 2001). But, chronic and prolonged stressors might eventually facilitate burnout. Education research correlates burnout with everything from teacher self-perception of existential significance (Pines, 2002) to student behavior patterns (Friedman, 1995). Athletic coaches represent another group of professionals who

share similar concerns such as competitive success, program goals, recruitment, retention, and travel. Two studies with particular relevance for professionals in athletic administration examine the inevitable strain that exists for those filling the responsibility of both coach and classroom teacher (Figone, 1986; Hebert, 2002). Others relate coach burnout to leadership styles and program goals (Ryska, 2002), coach commitment (Granzky, 2002) and coach behavior (Price & Weiss, 2000). In the area of burnout, coaches offer valuable lessons which extend far beyond the playing fields, swimming pools, tracks, and gymnasias. The occupational stress, if not dealt with properly, may have negative emotional and physical health consequences. These behaviors include a tendency on the part of an individual to blame others in an organization for one's own problems, increased absenteeism, increased involvement in interpersonal conflicts and confrontation, and increasing isolation from others in the organization (Maslach, 1997).

Pelletier (1984) stated that chronic stress leads to "serious health breakdown" (p. 35). Carlesworth and Nathan (1984) found seventy-five percent of their patients suffered from stress related symptoms such as intestinal problems, headaches, hypertension, palpitations, insomnia, back and muscle-aches, and psychiatric disorders. Over one hundred and ten million people take weekly medication for stress caused by self-imposed over-trying, unrealistic goals, or situational stress where the individual reacts to the event reported (Pelletier, 1984). When the body is subjected to prolonged periods of stress, internal changes can occur. Winter (1983) stated if stress is prolonged, the internal changes will cause a weak link in the body to break down and thus allow an infection or pathological disorder to develop or aggravate an existing disease. When considering emotional health, Martin, Kelley, and Eklund (1999) found Athletic directors with a tendency to find career issues stressful, and who were low in hardiness, experienced elevated stress and burnout. Mino, Babazono, Tsuda, and Yasuda (2006) found proper stress management may have potential for the prevention of depression. Brimm (1983) insisted that administrators need to learn to recognize stress so that they can actively cope before or as the stress occurs.

There are numerous environmental sources of stress in the secondary school setting. A stress response will occur as a result of an individual's interaction with and reaction to the stressor. Four widely accepted occupational stressors are: role-based stress, task-based stress, boundary-spanning stress, and conflict-mediating stress (Koch et al., 1982). Role-based stress is the Athletic Director's beliefs and perceptions regarding functioning within the school system. These roles can include responsibility for people and responsibility for things (Cobb, 1974). Responsibility involving people includes planning work schedules, rewards, and futures. Responsibility for things involves working with budgets, equipment, and projects (Cobb, 1974). Task-based stress is the daily performance of Interscholastic Athletic Director duties. In Thompson's (1985) study of school administrators and in Goeller's (1992) study of female principals task based stress caused strain. Boundary-spanning stress is composed of the Athletic Directors activities in relating the school to the public including activities like dealing with conference regulations and the state high school athletic association, and marketing and promoting the high school athletic program. The number of high school athletic programs

in the state of Mississippi that utilized corporate sponsorships increased over a five year period, from 50% in 2000, to 62.5% in 2004 (Hall & Gibson, 2004). The boundary spanning roles of marketing and promoting the high school program can be plagued by the deleterious effects of role stress (Goolsby, 1992). Conflict-mediating stress is composed of athletic directors' activities within the school such as resolving player, coach, teacher, and parent conflicts (Koch et al., 1982). The research of Stockard (1979), Quain and Parks (1986), Edson (1988), and Goeller (1992) found that conflict-mediating stress was an area of concern.

Research concerning the impact of stress on the Interscholastic Athletic Director is important. Facing constant deadlines from local and state organizations, daily interactions with staff, superiors, athletes, parents, and the community, the Interscholastic Athletic Director is constantly subjected to sources of stress. Today's workplace demands high performance of its employees, but that no longer means putting work ahead of daily enjoyment or health. Perhaps now, more than ever before, job stress poses a potential threat to the health of interscholastic athletic directors. As such, the athletic director must be able to identify job-related stressors in order to be able to develop a plan for dealing with the stress. The purpose of the study was to describe perceived administrative stress and its relationship to demographics among interscholastic athletic directors.

Methodology

Population

Interscholastic athletic directors from a Midwestern state in the United States comprised the population for the study. Currently, there are 389 interscholastic athletic directors as listed in the state high school athletic association school directory as full members.

Instrumentation

The collection of personal data and the stress questionnaire were the components of the survey instrument. The data was analyzed from responses to the questionnaires and represented the framework for the study.

A brief demographic data questionnaire was composed of seven items: 1. age, 2. years of Athletic director experience, 3. number of hours served as Athletic director per day, 4. the size of the school by student population, 5. male or female, 6. is there secretarial help for your position?, yes or not, and 7. is this position administrative?, yes or no. Respondents were also asked if they would like a synopsis of the study.

The questionnaire for assessing occupational stress perceived by Interscholastic athletic directors included a modified version of the Administrative Stress Index (ASI). Koch, Gmelch, Tung, and Swent (1982) developed and used the instrument, which measured job-related stress perceived by one thousand one hundred fifty-six Oregon school administrators. Written permission for the use of the ASI in this research study was obtained. The thirty-five work-related situations were measured according to a five-point likert-type response with headings of: 1. rarely or never bothers me, 2. infrequently bothers me, 3. bothers me, 4. occasionally bothers me, and 5. frequently bothers me.

The questionnaire measured the multidimensional nature of stress with regard to four factors: role-based stress, task-based

stress, boundary-spanning stress, and conflict-mediating stress.

The ASI is based on an initial questionnaire core of fifteen items from the job related Strain Index (Indik, Seashore, & Slesinger, 1964). The ASI was developed to provide a more specific and comprehensive measure of stress which is applicable for school administrators. Items were developed from stress logs kept by forty practicing administrators for one week with the pilot instrument field tested on twenty-five school administrators. The thirty-five item instrument was constructed after revisions and a second pilot test of twenty administrators (Koch et al., 1982).

Some slight modifications were made to the ASI. The name of the test was changed to Athletic director's Stress Index, the category "not applicable" was removed for statistical reasons, and three questions were changed from the original ASI. The changes that were made to develop the modified ASI for this study were examined by Dr. Swent and Dr. Gmelch and their approval was given.

Although the original ASI has been used in other studies, the changes that were made to develop the modified ASI for this study required an examination of reliability.

A cover letter, the modified questionnaire with a specific area for comments, and a self-addressed stamped envelope for returning the questionnaire were sent to twenty-four current high school athletic directors in suburban Chicago, Illinois. In a period of one month after the mailing date, the returned questionnaires were reviewed to determine the need for clarification. Revisions and refinement were made in response to the suggestions. No major changes were required.

Procedure

The study was conducted in a state in the Midwestern United States during the regular school year. Interscholastic athletic directors as listed in the state high school athletic association school directory as full members were asked to respond to the survey. The survey instruments, cover letters, and stamped return envelopes were mailed to the interscholastic athletic directors. The cover letter contained a brief explanation of the proposed study, its use, and the significance of the responses. The letter included a request to return the survey by a specified date and a request to notify the researcher should any questions or comments arise. Two weeks following the initial survey mailing, a follow-up letter was sent to those interscholastic athletic directors who did not return the survey.

Results

Demographics

Of the 389 interscholastic athletic directors, 288 returned the survey instrument by the deadlines stated in the cover letter which resulted in a 74 percent return. The demographic information for the participants in the study is listed in Table 1. The mean age for the interscholastic athletic directors is 46.39 years. The mean for the number of years served as athletic director was 9.48. The mean for the number of hours per day assigned to athletic director duties was 5.96. The mean for the size of the school by student population was 804.44. The male interscholastic athletic directors were 94.2 percent of the total population. Female interscholastic athletic directors were 5.8 percent of the total population. The

demographic information revealed that 72.3 percent of the respondents had secretarial help while 27.7 percent indicated that they did not have secretarial help. The demographic information revealed that 82.6 percent of the respondents' positions were considered as administrative.

Table 1. Interscholastic Athletic Director Demographic Data

	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Age	46.4	8.29	26	68
Experience	9.5	7.55	1	37
Hrs. of assigned time per day	6.0	2.64	1	12
Enrollment of the School	804.4	538.78	90	2800
N= 288				

Relationships of Job-Related Stressors

The mean value for each of the 35 items in the ASI was computed. Table 2 presents these findings from the performance of daily athletic director duties which are ordered from high of 4.00 to low of 1.00. Seven of the top ten items in the rank order of stressors were classified as task-based stress:

1. Feeling that I have too heavy of a work load, one I cannot finish during the normal day,
2. Imposing excessively high expectations on myself,
3. Trying to complete reports and other paper work on time,
4. Feeling that meetings take up too much time,
5. Being frequently interrupted by phone calls,
6. Having work frequently interrupted by staff members who want to talk,
7. Having to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people that I know (colleagues, staff, members, students, etc.).

The boundary-spanning stressor "Trying to gain public approval and/or financial support for school programs," was ranked sixth. The role-based stressor, "Feeling that staff members don't understand my goals and expectations," was seventh. The conflict-mediating stressor "Trying to resolve parent/school conflicts," was ranked eighth.

The items which were ranked as least stressful for Interscholastic athletic directors were primarily role-based items. Six of the lower ten stressors were role-based items:

1. Trying to resolve differences with my superiors,
2. Being unclear on just what the scope and responsibilities of my job are,
3. Speaking in front of groups,
4. Not knowing what my supervisor thinks of me or how he/she evaluates my performance,
5. Lacking sponsorship (support of another administrator), and
6. Lacking formal preparation of course work.

Table 3 presents a classification of the 35 stressors into the four factors of role-based stress, task-based stress, boundary-spanning stress, and conflict-mediating stress. The categories of task-based stress and conflict-mediating stress have the first and second highest mean scores, respectively. The mean and standard deviation values revealed that there was little variation among four

Table 2. Rank Order of Stressors for All Athletic Director Respondents

Mean	Rank	Item	Stressor
3.24	1	25	Feeling that I have too heavy a work load, one that I cannot finish during the normal work day
2.99	2	1	Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls
2.93	3	10	Imposing excessively high expectations on myself.
2.74	4	32	Trying to complete reports and other paper work on time.
2.72	5	31	Feeling that meetings take up too much time.
2.64	6	35	Trying to gain public approval and/or financial support for school programs
2.64	7	3	Feeling staff members don't understand my goals and expectations.
2.61	8	18	Trying to resolve parent/school conflicts.
2.53	9	9	Having my work frequently interrupted by staff members who want to talk.
2.51	10	15	Having to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people that I know (colleagues, staff members, students, etc.)
2.51	11	19	Preparing and allocating budget resources.
2.46	12	17	Feeling that I have too much responsibility delegated to me by my supervisor
2.44	13	2	Supervising and coordinating the tasks of many people.
2.42	14	11	Feeling pressure for better job performance over and above what I think is reasonable.
2.28	15	24	Evaluating staff member's performance.
2.28	16	33	Trying to resolve differences between/among staff members.
2.21	17	28	Feeling that the progress on my job is not what it should or could be.
2.20	18	20	Feeling that I have too little authority to carry out the responsibilities assigned to me.
2.16	19	26**	Complying with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies.
2.15	20	6	Thinking that I will not be able to satisfy the conflict-demands of those who have authority over me.
2.12	21	21	Handling student discipline problems.
2.02	22	34	Trying to influence my immediate supervisor's actions and decisions that affect me.
2.00	23	5	Knowing that I can't get information needed to carry out my job properly.
1.97	24	7	Trying to resolve differences between/among students.
1.85	25	12	Speaking in front of groups.
1.72	26	30	Being unclear on just what the scope and responsibilities of my job are.
1.70	27	14	Not knowing what my superior what my superior thinks of me or how he/she evaluates my performance
1.69	28	23**	Lacking sponsorship (support of another administrator)
1.41	29	29	Administrating the negotiated contact (grievances, interpretation, etc.)
1.41	30	16**	Lacking finances to continue graduate work.
1.36	31	13**	Lacking formal preparation of course work.
1.35	32	4	Feeling that I am not fully qualified to handle my job.
1.33	33	22	Being involved in the collective bargaining process.
1.26	34	8	Feeling that not enough is expected of me by my supervisors.
- -	35	- -	Not computed because of a typographical error.

* Questions modified from the original ASI.

*Question 26 and 27 were the same. Question 27 was deleted.

groups. The calculations of the 95th confidence intervals revealed that each dimension of administrative stress were progressively less on continuum from task-based stress to conflict mediating stress to boundary spanning stress to role-based stress. However, all dimensions of administrative stress would fall into the category ranking of 2.0 with whole number rounding.

Table 3. Classification of Stress Factors

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Mean + SD</i>	<i>95th CI</i>
Task-Based Stress	2.45 ± 0.60	2.39 - 2.51
Conflict Mediating Stress	2.28 ± 0.78	2.20 - 2.36
Boundary Spanning Stress	2.12 ± 0.65	2.06 - 2.18
Role-Based Stress	1.89 ± 0.54	1.85 - 1.93
*p<.05		

Stress and Age

Is stress among Interscholastic Athletic directors related to age? This particular research question was analyzed by means of a direct multiple regression to determine the relationships between the dependent variable of age and the four independent variables of role-based stress, task-based stress, boundary-spanning stress, and conflict-mediating stress. Table 4 shows the results. The multiple R was .1442 while the R Square was .0208. Approximately 2.08 percent of the variance of age is accounted for by the four independent variables of stress. None of the four independent variables of stress were significant at the .05 level.

Stress and Years Served

Is stress among interscholastic athletic directors related to the number of years served as athletic director? The significance relationship between the perceptions of interscholastic athletic directors regarding the causes of stress and the number of years served as Athletic director was tested by using a direct multiple regression. The computation assessed the relationships between the dependent variable of the number of years served as Athletic director and the four independent variables of role-based stress, task-based stress, boundary-spanning stress, and conflict-mediating stress. The multiple R was .1315 and the R squared was .0173 (Table 4). Approximately 1.73 percent of the variance of years of Athletic director experience is accounted for by the four independent variables of stress. None of the four independent variables of stress were significant at the .05 level.

Stress and Hours per Day

Is stress among interscholastic athletic directors related to the number of hours per day assigned to athletic director duties? This research question was tested by using a direct multiple regression to assess the relationships between the dependent variable of the number of hours per day assigned to athletic director duties and the four independent variables of role-based stress, task-based stress, boundary-spanning stress, and conflict-mediating stress. Table 4 shows the results. The multiple R was .1496 and the R squared was .0224. Approximately 2.24 percent of the variance of number of hours per day assigned to athletic director duties is accounted

for by the four independent variables of stress. None of the four independent variables were significant at the .05 level.

Stress and School Size

Is stress among interscholastic athletic directors related to the size of the school by student population? The significance of the relationship between perceptions of stress among interscholastic athletic directors and the size of the school by student population was tested by using a direct multiple regression. This assessed the relationships between the dependent variable of the size of the school by student population and the four independent variables of role-based stress, task-based stress, boundary-spanning stress, conflict-mediating stress. The results are listed in Table 4. The multiple R was .1008 and the R squared was .0102. Approximately 1.02 percent of the variance of the size of the school by student population is accounted for by the four independent variables of stress.

In summary, none of the four independent variables were significant at the .05 level. The complete results are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Administrative Stress and Demographics

	<i>r</i>	<i>r squared</i>
Age	.14	.021
Years served	.13	.017
Hours per day	.15	.022
Enrollment	.10	.010

Discussion

The review of literature and the data analysis support a number of conclusions. Interscholastic Athletic directors clearly revealed that task-based roles were most stressful. This was also found in Thompson's (1985) study of school administrators, and in GoellerÅfs (1992) study of female principals. This research has shown that most of the interscholastic athletic directors in the state, 82.6 percent, are administrators. These athletic directors, like the administrators in the other studies, set high expectations for themselves.

The data indicated that the interscholastic athletic directors perceived conflict-mediating stress as a category of high concern. The conflict-mediating item that was viewed as most stressful dealt with resolving parent/school conflicts. The research of Stockard (1979), Quain and Parks (1986), Edson (1988), and Goeller (1992) found that conflict-mediating stress was an area of concern.

Boundary spanning stress is a relatively new source of stress for athletic directors. Lack of funding has forced athletic programs to rely heavily on sponsorships for program survival (Hall & Gibson, 2004). The reason for such a trend can be traced to the 1980s and 1990s when inflation and reluctance of taxpayers to fund education resulted in many athletic programs being eliminated (Eitzen & Sage, 2003). Potential sources of boundary spanning stress include the personal and professional toll generated by a heavy workload of securing corporate sponsorship. The boundary spanning roles of marketing and promoting the high school program can be plagued by the deleterious effects of role stress (Goolsby, 1992). Tung and Koch (1980) found that older administrators are more

frequently bothered by boundary-spanning stress whereas younger administrators were more frequently bothered by task-based stress.

Role-based stress was the item with the lowest mean as determined by Interscholastic Athletic directors in the present study. These roles can include responsibility for schedules, budgets, equipment, and special projects as well as rewarding successful employees (Cobb, 1974). Goeller (1992) found that role-based stress had the lowest mean.

This study found no significance using the ASI on the factors of age, the number of years served as Athletic director, the number of hours per day assigned to Athletic director duties, and the size of the school by student population. The research of Sievert (1982) and Spradling (1984) found no significant relationships using the ASI with similar factors.

The four independent variables of role-based stress, task-based stress, boundary-spanning stress, and conflict-mediating stress did not explain a significant amount of the variance in the response to the ASI.

A concept closely associated with occupational stress is job burn-out. Occupational stress should not be equated with burnout, but chronic and prolonged stressors might facilitate burnout. The term *ÅgburnoutÅh* is frequently used in connection with high-pressure occupations. Job burnout actually has a presence in all occupations, regardless of whether or not the occupation is a high-pressure occupation (Maslach, 1997). Job burnout is thought to result from the combined effects of work-related factors that create unrelieved work stress, which, in turn, leads to a generally debilitated psychological condition in individuals. Friedman (1991) identifies the explicit manifestations of burnout in an educational situation as "...generally intense reactions of anger, anxiety, restlessness, depression, tiredness, boredom, cynicism, guilt feelings, psychosomatic symptoms, and, in extreme cases, nervous breakdown." Researchers from connected disciplines, such as coaching and education, have addressed, defined, and dissected the concept of burnout since Freudenberger's seminal study in 1974 (Maslach et al., 2001; Freudenberger, 1974).

Contemporary practice in interscholastic athletics sometimes fosters stressful conditions conducive to athletic director burnout. For example, the financial difficulties imposed on high school athletic programs from tough economic times in recent years could have serious consequences for the psychological well-being of their staff, particularly athletic directors (Eitzen & Sage, 2003). While many researchers point to extrinsic environmental causation (Veninga & Spradley, 1981; Winefield, 2003) professionals in athletic administration should also be aware of the central role played by intrinsic motivation. Organizations, high profile programs and prominent school administrators should take the lead in reducing burnout related circumstances. Novice professionals in athletic administration need to establish practices and patterns of behavior with physical and psychological wellness in mind.

Program Recommendations

Building general consciousness about occupational stress is the initial step in prevention. Assurance and support for the program from top level managers like principals and superintendents will only provide more positive results. Reduction in occupational

stress is a valuable time investment, as it will only stand to advance productivity, morale, and overall organizational climate. School districts should build athletic program philosophies and practices on values that transcend purely competitive goals (Ryska, 2002). They should work with administrators to determine reasonable program goals and assessment measurements (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Corporations should re-evaluate their present building level Interscholastic Athletic director positions towards providing adequate time to do the job with necessary clerical support staff. If deemed necessary, additional time and assistance should be provided to reduce the Interscholastic Athletic director task workload. Workshops and staff development conferences on how to resolve conflict mediating situations should be provided for Interscholastic Athletic directors and other administrative staff by school corporations on a continuing basis. Workshops for the Interscholastic Athletic director and other administrative staff should be provided that focus on occupational stressors and effective coping strategies; cognitive-behavioral interventions in particular (Van der Klink, Blonk, Schene, & Van Dijk, 2001).

Family type activities should be encouraged and provided by school corporations for the Interscholastic Athletic director and other administrative staff. Picnics, bus trips, and outings for the whole family are suggested activities that support the choice of social support systems as the number one coping resource. Balancing work with personal, family and social opportunities and responsibilities should be encouraged (Burnett & Olson, 1998). Work schedules that are compatible with demands and responsibilities outside the job should also be established.

School Corporations should have counselors with expertise in stress management and coping strategies available for Interscholastic Athletic directors and other administrative personnel. Interscholastic Athletic directors and other administrative staff should be encouraged to practice stress management techniques and use appropriate coping strategies on a daily basis. Textbooks at the university level should address occupational stressors and provide suggested coping strategies for the Interscholastic Athletic director.

The road to educational achievement and personal growth, development and fulfillment in athletics will no doubt feature an occasional late night bus ride that transports you to a significant fork in the road. The challenges of maintaining an interscholastic athletics program can be daunting. At times, the rewards may seem few in light of enormous sacrifices and costs.

In-service seminars and workshops should be provided for all beginning Interscholastic Athletic directors and other administrative staff to alert them to possible job-related stressors and suggested coping strategies. Corporations should provide self-care outlets for all Interscholastic Athletic directors and other administrative staff. Corporations should encourage and help athletic administrators choose a lifestyle that accommodates wellness (Leland, 2004). Wellness centers should be made available where the benefits of proper exercise, diet, and healthy living are explained and encouraged. Corporations should encourage and make available to Interscholastic Athletic directors and other administrative staff recreational activities such as travel opportunities, plays, and other cultural events. Professional journals and other reading materials should be made available to Interscholastic Athletic directors and

other administrative staff by school corporations. Cognitive skills should be encouraged as a coping resource. School corporations should provide interscholastic athletic and other administrative staff with workshops on time management techniques that would help alleviate task-based stress.

Research Recommendations

This manuscript represents only a modest beginning point for a further and far more sophisticated dialogue on the topic of occupational stress. This study begins several threads for more research in the field; stress management in every sport management position is an essential skill for productivity and quality of life optimization. And, as this research is situated in the United States and not necessarily generalizable, study on the impact of occupational stress on sport administrators from other countries is needed. A vital question for everyone is how can sport administrators identify and better manage occupational stress. A study should be conducted which looks at stressors and coping resources, that are utilized by Interscholastic Athletic directors whose span of responsibility extends beyond the secondary school. Further studies should be conducted in other states in the United States to determine if the stressors and coping strategies utilized by Interscholastic Athletic directors are similar or different. Instruments should be developed and field tested that deal specifically with occupational stressors and coping strategies used by Interscholastic Athletic directors. A study should be conducted that deals with the effects of occupational stressors and coping strategies of male versus female Interscholastic Athletic directors. A better understanding of how sport managers of various levels are experiencing stress similarly or differently can lead to better company and self-employed coping strategies.

Biographic Information

Lawrence W. Judge, Ph.D., is an assistant professor and coordinator of the graduate coaching education program in the School of Physical Education, Sport, and Exercise Science at Ball State University. He also has served as the undergraduate advisor for the Sport Administration program. Prior to arriving at Ball State, he was an NCAA Division I track and field coach for the 18 years.

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